

THE
FOOLISH
PROPHETS
DISPLAYED,

By *John Cooper*, PRIEST.

Ezekiel 13, 3.

Thus saith the Lord, Woe unto you foolish Prophets that follow your owne spirits, and have seene nothing.



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FOOT



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TO
THE WORSHIPFULL

his very loving Vncle, Ma-
ster Anthony Mattocke,

Rector of Westford in
Sussex.

IT is the part of some, what-
soever they doe impresse, to
dedicate the same unto great
persons; perhaps drawn with
this conceit, that what is
backed with a Prelate, will
not bee baulked by a subiect, but I have no such
acquaintance with the great ones, to pro-
cure a protection to keepe me secure from being
troubled with a Writ of Error, by these foolish

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Prophets : Some againe, do dedicate their works unto great Potentates, and with their large expressions of their vertues and better parts, that their children may take them for example, and patterne, to frame their lives by; but I may not follow them, lest I should exceed an Epistolary brevity in this so small a Treatise, and so in hazard to throw my house out of the window. Some howsoever in their works, yet not withstanding in their Epistles they do affect strained words, and strong lines; neither have I leasure to imitate these, but intend onely to make a little portch, with the broken bricke, and ttes that were left in this my small building; and have thought it my bounden duty to Dedicate it unto him, that did educate and bring me up, for what I have is wholly his; the cause that moved me to imprint the same, was the slanderous speeches that these foolish Prophets and their disciples gave out against mee, that my doctrine was flat Popery and blasphemie, and all this was because I told them the truth: it was Saint Pauls case when he told the Galatians of their faults, the fourth Chapter and the sixteenth Verse, Am I there;

The Epistle Dedicatory.

therefore your enemy because I tel^y you the truth, and the Comical Poet on th^e corruptions of the time, saith, Obsequium amicos, veritas odium parit; that is, slavery gets favour, but truth hath only hatred or her paines: even so, had I in flatterring ~~w~~^{we} extolled their fopperies, I might have purchased their love. Although it is a glory for Christian (following the example of our I^rd) to bury all other wrongs in silence and oblivion, yet notwithstanding in a matter of faith to bee silent, doth beget and lay a great scandall upon us: this is the reason that moved mee to publish the same to the view of the world, to vindicate my selfe from their foolish aspersions: For against those wounds that are inflicted by the tongue, there is no Chyrurgion to bee found amongst men on earth: therefore I did betake my selfe unto Iesus the heavenly Physician, who gave mee a strong Antidote out of the Spicknard box of the Gospell, that did mitigate my griefe. Matthew 5. Blessed are you when men shall persecute you, and say all manner of evill against you falsely, &c. and I for my part was contented with this medicine,
and

A ne epistle Dedicatory.

and had decreed to keepe silence, and said within my selfe; if they have called the Master of the family Belzebub: How much more will they miscall mee his unworthy servant; if it was said unto him that hee was a seducer of the people, it shall not trouble mee to be called an heretique, if my Lord Christ was calld a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of Publicans and sinners, why should it trouble mee to be broadished with their surmising invectives, but a just necessity is impos'd on me to divulge my abbreviates, because they have offended these seeming pure Prophets, lest by my silence I should acknowledge my selfe guilty.

John Cooper.



Ezckiel 13. 3.

*Thus saith the Lord, woe unto you foolish Prophets
that follow your owne spirits, and have seene nothing.*



Atan, in former times did carry
himselfe for the most part as he
was a blacke Saint, and after a
bloody manner did professe his
enmity unto mankind ; and set
on wicked men his instruments
(most like himselfe) to deale
cruelly with the true professors of God, and to make
havocke of them, untill the incarnation : the incar-
nation of our blessed Lord and Saviour, the eternall
Sonne of God. Vntill wee were brought out of the
shadow of death into the Sunne-shine of the Gos-
pell, untill wee had the word to bee a light to guide
our feete into the way of peace, untill the holy Ghost
was shed abundantly into mens hearts, untill his O-
racles ceased, another kinde of engine that hee used
for bloodshed, but since that Christianity hath gotte
such an head, and that the true professors thereof do
daily increase and grow so fast ; that he, and his Dis-

The foolish Propbers displaid.

Math. 7. 15.

2 Cor. 11. 14.

Orat. in Catili-
na. 1773.

ciples cannot openly abridge, and stoppe the current and free passage thereof, why now this blacke Saint, this roaring Lion practiseth with *Lysander, ubi leoni, na pelvis non sufficit, assuenda vulpina*. Whereas now hee cannot prevaile as a roaring Lion, he practiseth as a subtile Fox, or as our Saviour foretold, hee is now a Wolfe in a Sheepskin; hee hath now transformed himselfe into an Angell of light, and under a pretence of godlinesse, would overthrow the true worshipp of God; and doth use Scripture against Scripture, so that which he cannot effect by Infidels and Pagans, and others *ejusdem farinae* of the same scum of rascality, he indeavoureth to accomplish by you my deare brethren, that are the pillars of the Church to overthrow the Church: and thus doth hee labour to divide our house against it selfe, that it may be laid wast and desolate, and so that which he cannot disannul by fire and sword, by open violence and hostility, treasons & conspiracies; he laboureth and is in good hope, that he shall infringe by your authority, by your religion, by your iarring and disconsonant tenents. I know that there will not bee wanting some, that will blame mee for wading into this Text: but let such know, for the respect and duty that I owe unto my Mother the Church: I will venter and enter upon the same, and herein I am of a Roman spirit, *Invidia virtute partem, gloria, non invidia putare*, envy gotten by vertue and for speaking the truth, is not envy, but glory; and I would have you my auditors thinke, that this Text is undertaken of mee rather out of piety, then to rip open some mens absurdities, rather out of a zealous complaint,

The foolish Prophets displaid.

plaint, then malice: if then I shall speake more sharply and freer then some others before mee, I make no question but that you will ascribe it to a godly sorrow and just anger. And what griefe can be more pious then that which doth arise for the common good, neither can any anger bee more just then that which doth tend to the glory of God; pardon me then if for his cause, I doe transcend the bounds of patience against foolish Pastors, when our Saviour himselfe could doe no lesse in this case against the teachers in his time; *We wmo you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you shut up the Kingdome of Heaven amongst men,* for you neither got in your selves neither doe you suffer them that are entring to goe in: and now I am conceited of you all, that you are perswaded, that it is for the glory of God, that I pronounce this judgement denounced against hereticall Prophets and Pastors, and not of any spleene: and if wee doe consider it well; it is not I, nor the Prophet *Ezekiel* that speaketh this, but God himselfe, for *thus saith the Lord, &c.*

Math. 23. 13.

- 1 Here is a Iudge, God; *Thus saith the Lord.*
- 2 A judgement denounced, or the sentence of the Iudge, *Wee.*
- 3 The delinquents against whom this judgement is denounced, illiterate Pastors, *thus saith the Lord, &c.*
- 4 Wherein their folly doth consist, or the ground of the judgement, and it is in following their owne spirit, and have seene nothing.

The foolish Prophets displaid.

1 The Iudge God, *thus saith the Lord.* I will not here stand to speake of the Divine essence, and attributes of God, for then I should bee infinite, but only as hee doth concurre with the words of my Text, as he is a Iudge.

Such is the nature of many men, that they are more desirous of new things then good things; and to humor such, there are some preach rather out of faction, then true affection; and when those novel-lors do heare these factions, they are tickled and affected with their new fangled doctrine, (as some truly sayd of our Saviour) *never man spake as hee spake,* so these falsely say, never man taught as these teach, yet in this respect they say the truth, for they teach that which was never taught before them, but although these doe highly extoll them, although these doe count them blessed, although they are deepe in these men and womens bookes, and deeper in their purses, yet notwithstanding, the eyes of God that penetrate and pierce the hearts and reines of all men, seeth no such thing in them; in the judgement of God, that is the Iudge of all the world they are reputed no such Saints, for *thus saith the Lord,* wee unto you, &c.

Then let these foolish Pastors learne to bee more wise, and know this, though many simple men and more silly women; nay, though all the men in the world should magnifie them, it is nothing, if *thus saith the Lord,* and *thus saith the Lord,* wee unto you foolish Prophets, &c.

Again

The foolish Prophets displaid.

Againe let all godly Pastors know this, that follow not their owne spirit, but are led and guided by the Spirit of God: though some simple men and women, may; though all the world should curse them, it is nothing, if *thus saith the Lord*, and *thus saith the Lord, blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you, &c.* For, *si Deus nobiscum*; if *Emanuel, if God bee with us, quis contra nos, who can bee against us?* againe, if God bee against them, who can bee with them? and *thus saith the Lord, woe unto you foolish Prophets, &c.* Math. 5. 11, 12.
Rom. 8. 31.

This ule let us make, let not any Minister hereafter, hunt after the praise and commendations of men which are fickle, and quickly moveable, for they will say to day, of a truth, this is the Sonne of God, and to morrow, *crucifie him, crucifie him*, let us not then I say, breath after their pleasant suffrages, & so incur the displeasure of Almighty God, *for he that seeketh after any more then him, is not worthy of him*, he that will not leave the love of these, for the love of God, is not worthy of him: let us not then make him, that desireth not the death of the most notorious sinner, to enter into judgement with us, let us not provoke him that thinketh of us Pastors as precious as the apple of his owne eye, to cry, *Woe unto us*, let us not cause him that saith, *bee wise* now therefore, *O yee Kings, and bee learned yee that are Iudges*, to call us foolish Prophets. And this shall suffice to bee spoken of the first particular, the Iudge, G O D, *thus saith the Lord*. use.
Math. 10. 37.
Psal. 2. 10.

The foolish Prophets displaid.

The second
part.
Objection.

The sentence of the Iudge, or the judgement denounced *Woe, thus saith the Lord, Woe.*

But an objection may be made by some, why the Prophet here cryeth, *Woe unto the foolish Prophets*, seeing that wee are not to use any reviling speeces against any, much lesse towards men of our owne profession:

Answer.

1 Sam. 17. 43.

There is great difference, when a man out of choller and heate of blood raileth upon any, as *Goliath* cursed *David*, and when one in the name of the Lord denounceth a curse, which is no imprecation of evill, but a prediction or warning of their just punishment, and thus the Prophets every where proclaime, and our Saviour himselte oftentimes did cry, *Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees*, and Saint *Ambrose* doth give the reason, *non maledicis propheta, sed quasi medicus vult illos sanare, ut de proprijs flagitijs erubescant*, the Prophet doth not curse, but as a Physitian hee would heale them, and make them ashamed of their sinnes: and so Saint *Hierom*, concerning *Peter* about the death of *Ananias* and *Sapphira* his wife, *non maledicis, sed Dei iudicium spiritu annunciat, ut pene duorum sit doctrina multorum*, hee did not curse them, but with a prophetick spirit, hee doth declare Gods judgement, that the punishment of two might bee a warning, or lesson for many; and so doth the Prophet here, foretelleth the fearefull end of these foolish Prophets, and testifies Gods judgments against them.

At the first sight some may thinke that they may easily run over this little woe, but if wee consider it well, it is the same with *Anathema* or cursed, and those

The foolish Prophets displaid.

those eight woes that our Saviour pronounced against the Scribes and Pharisees are just opposite unto the eight blessings which hee propounded unto the humble in spirit, and the pure hearted with the rest. Saint John the Divine heard an Angell from Heaven crying, *Woe, woe, woe unto the inhabitants of the earth.* On which three woes a Father descants thus, *ve, pra magnitudine, ve, pra multitudine, ve, pra aeternitate poenarum* : *ve, pra magnitudine*, wo in respect of the greatnesse of their punishment, it is the punishment of hell fire, *depart from me ye cursed into hell fire*, and saith a Father, *minima poena inferni, major est maxima poena huius mundi.* The least punishment in hell, is greater then the biggest upon earth. And though earthly punishments bee great, yet by daily inuring the same, in time, they will become light and easie, as the Poet well observeth, *quod male fers, assuesce, feres bene* ; that which at the first doth seeme unsupportable, in time will grow light and easie, but in the second place to aggravate their misery, their wo, the Angell saith, *ve, pra multitudine*, wo, in respect of the multitude of torments that shall bee inflicted upon them every day, they shall have new & exquisite punishments; when their sinewes are shrunk up together with the fervent heate of the fire, then they shall bee brought to the racke, and be drawn out an acres breadth with *Titus*. Sometimes, againe, when they are so thirstie in the flames with *Dives*, that they desire but one drop of water to coole the tip of their tongues, they shall bee set up to the chinne in water, tantalizing with *Tantalus*, and not get one sup in their extremity,
with

Math. 23.

Math. 5.

The foolish Prophets displaid.

with many more severe and endlesse kinde of torments, for if *neither eye hath seene, nor eare hath heard, nor hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive*, how great, and how many shall bee the joyes in Heaven, why then, contrarily *neither eye hath seene, nor eare hath heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive*, how great and how many shall bee the torments in hell. But although their misery, their woes shall bee great and many, yet if they should once come to an end and have their period, there might bee some comfort, although they should bee greater then wee can imagine, and more in number then the sands on the shore, and wee should endure them as many yeares as there are atomes in the Sunne, there was some hope and heart in it, but to make up the totall summe of their misery, their wo, the Angel saith, *ua pra aternitate penarum*, woe in respect of the eternity of their punishment! heaven and earth shall passe away, but their misery, their wo shall not passe, their sufferings shall as it were but there begin, where other things shall have an end.

So then, when the Prophet doth say *Woe*, hee doth as much as if hee should say, let them bee *anathema*, let them bee accursed, or any thing else, if any can bee more bitter then these, but is it possible? This one small word, these two or three letters, this monosyllable, this *Woe* should containe such an ocean of misery? and yet it is most true, that all the execrations and detestations that are written in the Law, in *Moses*, and in the Prophets, and in the Gospel, in the Evangelists, and Apostles, and if there

were

The foolish Prophets displaid.

were ten thousand thousand more, yet were they all but, *Woe, Woe, Woe*, and thus saith the Lord, *Woe.*

The delinquents against whom this judgement is denounced, Foolish prophets, thus saith the Lord, &c. The third part

Me thinks that I am now in a maze, or labyrinth. I am at a stand, and know not how to go on, for I am loath of all others to put the foole upon Prophets and Pastors, hadst thou saide, woe unto you foolish Elyants that follow your Lawyers so fast, that you have runne your selves out of your estates, before you can know the state of your cause, and by your many Non-suits in Law, have left you no suits to your backs, I would make no stay at all to call such Fooles? Or hadst thou saide, Woe unto the foolish women (but it is likely that there were none such in thy daies) that rend the common prayers out of their childrens Books, I could call such Fooles? Or hadst thou said, woe unto the foolish Miser, unto him that hath neither child nor brother, yet there is no ende of his labour, neither doth hee say, for whom doe I bereave my selfe of good? this, *Solomon* calls follie; nay, unto such a covetous wretch that will plucke downe his Barnes to build them bigger, I would thou foole him with my Saviour? Or hadst thou saide, woe unto the foolish Atheists, that eat and drinke, and rise up to play, and thinke there is no God at all, but when they die they suppose they shall bee as if they never had beene at all: I could call these foo'es with the Prophet

C

Eccles.
Luke 12.26.

The foolish Prophets displaid.

Mat. 14. 1.

phet David that say in their hearts that there is no God? But woe unto you foolish Prophets, mee thinkes at the naming of these words I am extasied, I cannot beleeeve that I may call you fooles, and for this my infidelity, I stand here dumbe a while with old Zachary, calling to minde the words of my Saviour, *he that calleth his brother Foole is in danger of hell fire*, what then shall I do in this straight? shall I leave out the *Fooles*, & let it runne thus, woe unto you Prophets? why this is more harsh, this is generall, the woe now includes all Prophets, it excludes none. O then what shall I say, shall I take away the Prophets and leave the Fooles? why then I falsify and corrupt the text, and so plucke downe the wrath and curse of God upon my owne head: If any man shall adde unto these things, God shall adde unto him all the plagues that are written in this booke,

Matth. 5. 22.

Reve. 22. 18.

Deut. 4. 2.

Exod. 32. 32.

Rom. 9. 3.

And if any man shall take away from the words of this booke, God shall take away his part out of the booke of life: Yet I could wish my selfe with Moses, to be ras'd out of the booke of life, so you would grow wise and not perish, or with S. Paul I could wish wo unto my selfe, my selfe Anasbema, so you might bee blessed. I thinke it not amisse to shew unto you in brieft, how these words of Moses and Paul are to be taken, because they have put scruples unto many, that any should wish his owne damnation, and to be accursed unto Christ. A good Shepheard, saith our Saviour, will give his life for his Sheepe, so Moses and Pauls words are to bee taken in my poore opinion, to die for the present, not for ever: For who-

The foolish Prophets displaid.

fewer shall lose his life for Christs sake, shall finde it, therefore they were willing to die in the flesh, that others might bee sound in spirit; to give their owne blood, that the soules of many might bee saved. But why should I bee so fearefull to call you Fooles? as Saint Bernard laid of the Bishops of Rome, it is a shame to speake what is done of them in secret. I thinke it better to dissemble & conceale these things: but why should I bee ashamed to speake, that which they are not ashamed to do? so may I say, why should I bee afraid to call you Fooles, that are not ashamed of your foolishnes? doe you leave off your folly, and I will cease to call you Fooles, or as Saint Paul when hee told the *Corinthians* of their faults, *I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sonnes I* 1 Cor. 4. 14.
warne you: so may I say, I call you not fooles to shame you, but as my beloved brethren I warne you, to leave off your follie, and grow more wise.

And now since I have taken courage to call them fooles, I thinke it not amisse to give you some markes whereby you may know them, for although they are fooles, yet they are crafty ones, and have transformed themselves into the habits of true Apostles, for as Satan can transforme himselfe into an Angell of light, so his disciples into the habit of true disciples. I will then give you the marke of the Beast out of the generall Epistle of *Jude*, for I will confine my selfe to one Chapter, that you may see that the Apostle had a speciall care to discover these foolish Prophets, that should arise up in these latter
C 2 times;

The foolish Prophets displaid.

times; the first marke that I will bring to lay open these foolish Prophets is in the fourth verse of the generall Epistle of *Iude*.

Iude 4.
The first mark

There are certaine men crept in, and is not this a marke of a foolish Prophet to creepe into corners and private houses, and despise the publique assemblies of the Church; for, *Veritas non querit angulos*, truth delights not in corners, it is folly and falsehood, that useth such slie and slippery meetings.

He saith, that there but are certaine men crept in, how much are wee bound to give God thanks, that hee will not suffer them to grow to an head; for if there were a multitude of foolish Prophets, wee should have many wise Flocks.

Psal. 59.6.

The Prophet *David* also being inlightned by the holy spirit, that there should arise up false Prophets in the latter daies, giveth us notice whereby wee shall know them; first, from their manners, and manner of meetings: They goe to and fro in the evening; that is, they gather and assemble themselves together in the evening, and have their private conventicles; this is their manner of meeting.

They grinne like a Dog; that is, they laugh and fleere at all that passe by them, that are not of their owne sort and sect, this is their manner, to grinne and irride others that deserve better then themselves.

Secondly, he discovereth them from their matter and manner of preaching, their manner of preaching

The foolish Prophets displaid.

ing is cursings, their cursings and invectives are against the Bishoppes and their Officials, that would have them doe all things decently and in order. *Loquacitatem facundiam existimant, et maledicere omnibus bonis conscientia signum arbitrantur*; they count brauling eloquence, and they take it for the signe of a good conscience to vilifie all.

The matter of their preaching is lies, they make their disciples beleve that all others doe erre and go astray, and that they adhere too much to popery and such like, and that they onely have the word of truth; and what else is this but vanity and lies? *From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*, now in the fifth *Psal.* hee saith, *There is no faithfulness in their mouths, their inward parts are full of wickedness, because their inward part, their heart is infected,* is the cause that there is no faithfulness in their mouths, their preaching is of lies. Psal. 5.9.10.

Thus you see how lively the Prophet hath portrayed them out, they meete in the evening, they grinne at passengers, they curse those that are in authority, and feede their disciples with vanities and lies, and *David* to shew these nightly meetings to bee distastfull unto God, saith, *as for mee I will sing of thy power and will praise thy mercy betimes in the morning.* Psal. 59.16. Saint *Paul* saith, and of this sort are those that creepe into houses and lead captive simple women, and are not most of their howled disciples women, and saith Saint *Hierome*, *Quid volunt misera muliercula onerata peccatis, quæ circumferuntur omnivento doctrina, semper discentes et nunquam ad scienti-*

The foolish Prophets displaid.

am veritatis pervenientes: that is, what will become of these wretched women that are laden with sinne, and carryed about with every blast of doctrine, alwaies learning, and never comming to the knowledge of the truth. *Simon Magus haresin condidit, sed Helena meretricis adjutus auxilio, Simon Magus* set a foote his heresies by the helpe and assistance of *Helena* a Whore, *Nicholaus Antiochenus omnium immunditiarum repertor choros duxit fameos. Nicholaus* of *Antioch*, the founder of all uncleannesse had congregations of women following him, *Martion Romā pramisit mulierem, qua decipiendos sibi animos prepararet, Martion* the heretique sent a woman before him to *Rome*, by whose inticements hee might the easier delude them at his comming. *Montanus immundi spiritus pradicator multas ecclesias per Priscam et Maximillam mulieres nobiles et opulentas corrupit, et haresis polluit, Montanus* the Devils preacher did corrupt & defile with heresies many Churches, by the helpe of *Prisca* and *Maximilla* noble and wealthy women: but against these clandestine meetings saith our Saviour, when the high Priests asked him of his doctrine; hee answered, I spake openly in the world, my Sermon was on the mount, I ever taught in the Synagogue and in the Temple, whether the Jewes continually resort, and in secret have I said nothing, and so the Prophet *David*, *I will give thee shaukes in the great congregation, I will praise thee among much people;* From whence wee may gather, that to teach openly before all men in a periloustime, is a manifest signe of the truth, then to teach

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teach privately and in corners in a peaceable time, is a badge of folly and falsehood, then let us preach in the Temple *honestly in the day time, and not in chambering and wantonnesse*: is not this then the marke of a foole, to swarve thus from our Masters rule? To conclude this point with the words of Saint Hierome *Sacerdote fidem veram predicante, ex omni corde tenebra discutiuntur: lucerna non accenditur, et ponitur sub modio, sed supra candelabrum, ut luceat omnibus*; that Minister that will take upon him to preach the true faith, must avoide tenebrizing from the bottome of his heart: a candle is not lightned to be set under a bushell, but on a candlesticke, that it may give light unto all, therefore the seven Churches in the *Revelations* are compared to seven candlesticks.

Rom. 13.13.

They defile the flesh. Lust, and luxury is the second marke of these foolish Prophets; for when they have enticed and gotten these simple women into corners, as S. Paul speakes, why then Satan having a fit opportunity, doth most of all assault unto the deeds of darknesse, fleshly appetite imitating the Sonnes of *Hele* that would sleepe with the women in the Church, and convert the best of the sacrifices to satisfie their owne palats; but let them know, although they were beloved of God, and enlightened by the holy Spirit, yet this same pollution of the flesh would deprive them of both, of Gods love, and the Spirits light, exemplified in *Solomon* beloved of God, and to whom the Lord did vouchsafe twice to shew himselfe; because hee was a lover of women,

The 2. marke.

The foolish Prophets displaid.

women, hee did forsake the love of God, and therefore saith Saint *Hierome*. *Sunt quidam qui ideo presbyteratum et Diaconatum ambiunt, ut mulieres licentius videant*, some shew to bee made Priests and Deacons, that they may have more freedome and libertie to looke upon women, contrary to *Iobs* doctrine (I have made a league with my eyes not to looke upon a woman) such you would thinke rather to bee fond lovers then Clerkes. Againe, *clerici isti osculantur capita matronarum et extenta manu ut benedicere eos velle putet, si nescias pretia accipiunt salutandi*. The Priests doe kisse the chiefeſt Matrons, and stretching forth their handes as you would thinke to blesse them; if you know not the cause, why it is to receive the price of their imbraces, and a little after *padet dicere reliqua, ne videar potius invehi quam monere*, I am ashamed saith hee, to utter the rest, least I should seeme rather to inveigh, then admonish, so I leave the rest to the world, or let themselves be judge.

The 3 marke.

They despise government, they cannot endure that, that there should bee any rule or superiority, whereas the Scriptures in all places doe set forth, and highly extoll government, and that it is to bee honoured, and that they which doe teach other waies are seducers and follow their owne, I meane an eroneous spirit, they are like distempered *Ishmael*, that *bad his hand against every one, and every man against him*, so theſe would care for none, and no body cares for them: But as *Tully* in his Oration, *pro Sextio*, counselled his Country men, when cer-
taine

The foolish Prophets displaid.

raine upstarts and factious spirits, would have had them innovated and renounced their ancient Lawes and Ceremonies, let us turne our eyes from these (saith hee) being not worth the looking after. *Imitatur nostros* Brutos, Camillos, Decios, Curios, *et innumerabiles alios que hanc rempub, stabila verunt*; that is, let us imitate our *Brutus*, or *Camillus*, our *Decius*, our *Curious*, our *Scipio's* our *Lentuloes*, and innumerable others that have founded and established this common wealth; so say I, let us turne our eyes from these foolish Prophets, that would have us to alter our Lawes, and lawfull Ceremonies, and let us imitate our *Peter Martyre*, our *Bucer*, our pretious *Jewell*, our *Fulkes*, our *Whitaker*, our renowned and learned *Andrewes*, and innumerable others that have reformed our English Church, and to conclude this point with *Tullys* conclusion on that subject, *amemus patriam, pareamus senatui, consulamus bonis*: Let us love our Country, let us obey our Magistrates, let us take advice of good men, to say I, let us love our Country and not raise up any mutinies, let us obey our Magistrates, and not rebell against Authority, let us take advice of sound and solid Divines, and let us not follow these foolish Prophet, that run headlong of their own head, and have seene, and have knowne nothing.

They speake evill of those that are in Authority, The 4. Marke
they doe not only find fault with government, but
they also revile governors, all Magistrates Civill,
Ecclesiastical, they hate the officer for his office sake,
and following their owne spirit (for the spirit of God

The foolishb Propbers displaid.

is meeke, as our Saviour said, to some of his Disciples when they would have had him to call for fire downe from Heaven, yee know not what spirit yee are of) they doe revile and curse to the pit of hell, whereas they should teach the people as *Paul* doth, *Be yee subject to the higher Powers, not only for feare, but also for conscience sake,* they should teach that whosoever striketh with the sword, by private authority against authority, shall perish by the sword, and if our Prince and Bishops should be wicked and cruell (which God bee praised for the contrary) yet they are to teach the people with the Prophet *David*, *touch not mine annointed, and doe my Prophets no harme* ; and therefore saith Saint *Ambrose*, *our weapons must bee teares and prayers* : For as hee that shootes against a stone doth not wound the same, but many times his arrow doth rebound and hit and hurt himselfe ; even so, whosoever shall shoote his arrowes, even sharpe and bitter words, against Christs Stewards or himselfe the true corner stone, they shall not offend them, but they shall retort and light upon themselves, for with what judgement they shall judge others, with the same they shall be judged, then let us bridle our unruly tongues, let us set a watch over all our words, and let us know this, that wee doe then most firmly obey Christ, when wee study to yeeld all bounden duty unto those that are set over us, and as *Soloman* saith, *qui dat pauperibus fœneratur Domino*, *hee that giveth unto the poore lendeth unto the Lord* ; so may I say, hee that honoureth his Superiours God will honour him,
and

The foolish Prophets displaid.

and there by hee doth superabound in honouring of God, for hee that doth reverence the deputed, doth it for his sake that deputeth, and therefore saith Saint *Hirome*, *Destructioni est corpus expositum, cum membra discordant à capite*, the body is neare to destruction, when the members vary from the head, then let us strive to exceed one another in obedience, for there can be no Church, no religious persons, no Priests, where obedience towards the Prelates is wanting in the subjects, is not this then the cognisance of a foolish Prophet to revile Magistrates whom they are to honour, for so saith our Saviour, *give honour to whom honour belongeth*, and so you know what hee saide unto *Peter*, when hee drew forth his sword to resist authority, *put it up againe into thy sheath*, so say I unto those that have whet their tongues like sharpe swords and raysors to cut downe authority, refraine your hote speech, and pray the Lord to set a watch before your mouthes, and keepe the dore of your lippes, lest your tongues at any time breake forth against authority.

They feede themselves without feare, they are men given to their bellies, or as Saint *Paul* saith, *they make their belly their god*, and may I not goe on step forward with *Calvin* and the Kitching, their religion, and this is the reason perhaps that they set so litle by the Church, and have their meeting in private houses, because they are sure to eate and drinke of the best, after the conferring of their notes, and thus do these *Esau*s change their birthright, the

The 5. Marke
Rom. 16. 18.
Phil. 3. 19.

The foolish Prophets displaid.

*Hier. par. 3. iv. 5.
ep. 98.*

Church for a good meales meate into a private house, learne what Saint *Hierome* saith of house creeping Prophets, *facile contemnitur clericus qui sepe vocatur ad prandium et ire non recusat, nunquam petentes, raro accipiamus rogati*, that Minister is quickly despised that is often invited to dinner, and refuseth not to goe, wee must never invite our selves, and seldome goe being invited, but these feed themselves without feare, and *Luther* on the fift Psalmc taketh notice of them, *Religiose praeter ceteris factiones, non nisi ad invidiam mutuum et saturandum ventrem religiose sunt* : That same sect which would seeme more religious then any other, are religious only in respect of the mutuall enmity betweene them and others sects to get them a name, *fama non famen quarunt*, it is fame not fast they desire, and also *ad saturandum ventrem*, to feast their bodies, these are the two reasons of their Zeale, your crooked conditioned women, alwaies desire forgeries and fables litigious saying, *sublize* their hearts, *they seeke after vanities and lyes*, and if any will preach such lessons unto them ; why such, saith Saint *Hierome*, they account the first beloved sonnes of God, and their ghostly fathers and brethren, but saith hee, if you will give them their right name you make them their bedfellows, and defilers of their soules and bodies: these Prophets they maintaine with all the requisite dishes and dainties that can bee got, and the dearest wines, and when their bellies swell with meate, and their heads swimme with wine, they reiterate and ingeminate that saying of the Apostle, *so*
the

The foolish Prophets displaid.

the pure all things are pure.

They feed themselves without feare, the foolish birds if a baite or traine bee laide for them by the Fowler, will feede thereon without feare, not minding the snares and nets that will intrap them; even so foolish Prophets will feede on delicates and dainties without feare, not considering the nets of gluttony and lusts, that are laid for them by Satan, that foule and subtle Fowler; for saith *Gregory Nazianzene*, hee that delicately pampereth his belly, and yet would over come the spirit of fornication, is like him that would quench a flaming fire with oyle. And Saint *Hierome* in this case is not ashamed to confesse his owne infirmities, that others might take heede thereby; Even I, who for feare of the punishment of hell, did cloyster up my selfe in a solitary Cabine, and made my cheekes looke pale and leane with my fasting, and yet notwithstanding in my cold and starved body my minde was hote with vaine desires, but my flesh being mortified and dead, yet the fire of concupiscence did boyle in mee: If those that by their often fastinges did labour to subjugate their bodies, did feelee the fiery darteres of lust; what shall wee thinke of these foolish Prophets that allow not of fasts, but feede themselves without feare? surely great are the scorching flames of their voluptuous wishes, and this is the reason that they desire to creepe into corners, and leade captive simple women, & defile the flesh to quench the heate of their unlawfull desires. They feede themselves without feare. *Odericus* reports of a peo-

*Par. 3. br. 9.
ep. 67.*

The foolish Prophets displaid.

ple that feed their gods in their sacrifice with smoake and themselves eate the meate, even so these in their sacrifice of praier and thanksgiving, offer nothing else unto the Lord, but the dust and smoake of their own inventions, and eate the meate of his first-fruits and tenths themselves : King *David* taxeth their gluttony where hee saith, that *their throate is an open sepulchre*, hee is not content to compare their throate to a grave that devoureth all that comes, but to expresse their unsatiable greedinesse, hee saith, that *their throate is an open sepulchre*, alwaies gaping for more, our Saviour also observing the widenesse of their throates saith, that *they absorbe and swallow downe Widdowes houses under a colour of long prayers*, for they feede themselves without feare.

Luk. 20. 47.

The 6.marke.

Clouds they are without water, carried about of the wind before the comming of Christ in the old Law, the Pastors were called Clouds, as *Moses* acknowledgeth himselfe to bee a Cloud, *my doctrine shall drop as the raine, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the showre upon the herbs, and as the great raine upon the grasse*, and the Prophets were called Clouds, to whom the Lord gave charge that they should not raine upon *Israel*, but at the comming of *Iohn* the Baptist all propheticall Offices ended. *Iohn* was not a cloud, but *vox clamantis in deserto*, the voyce of one crying in the Wildenesse, hee was the voyce and sound of the Word that was comming, Christ; *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word*; it was the petition of the Spouse that her beloved would kisse her with

Cant. 2. 1.

The foolish Prophets displaid.

with the lips of his owne mouth; that is, hitherto hee had taught his Church by *Moses* and *Aaron*, by the greater and lesser Prophets, but now shee desireth that hee would come and teach her from his owne mouth; hee answereth her request, *the winter is past*, Cant. 2. 1. *the showres are changed and gone away*, the propheti- call clouds are taken away not to our losse, but for our greater gaine, what neede is there of clouds and showres, when the River of God doth rejoyce and refresh the ground and valleyes of our hearts, and springeth up into everlasting life, the Winter of the Law is past, the showres of darke prophesies are past, and gone by, the Summer of the Gospell is appeared, Christ himselfe hath taught us out of the fountaine of life; but yet hereticall clouds will arise ever and anone, and envelop the Sunne for a season, but they will soone bee dispersed with every gale of the Gospell, because they want water.

Clouds they are, that is, they are such that doe promise us many heavenly showres, to refresh and soften our hard and thirstie hearts, Clouds they are, that is, they mount up into the middle region in words, they are alwaies teaching and preaching but yet their words are empty, like clouds without water, they want matter, they are not substantiall, their words are not words of power and authority, as the words of Christ and his Apostles, but their words are like the words of the Scribes and Pharisees, full of emptinesse and vanity, these clouds, these words, are without water, the water of life, the sincere word of God, they only have the smoake and puddle of their

The foolish Prophets displaid.

their owne inventions : They are carryed about with the winde ; that is, they are puffed up and carried with the winde of pride and vaine glory, for it is onely praise of and glory of men that they seeke after ; it is their blisse with *Herod* to heare their disciples cry, *non vox hominum sonat, ô deus cerse*, it is not the voyce of man but of God, and thus with this gust of pride, as with a gale of winde, these empty vessels like cloudes without water doe coast it about.

The 7 marke.

They are wandring Starres; in the former marke, they did imitate *Moses* and the Prophets, that saw but the backe parts of God darkly through a cloud, and because the Law doth threaten, *Who so ever shall fulfill all the Commandements, and faileth but in one point, is guilty of all : doe this and thou shalt live.* Therefore they were called Cloudes, and because these foolish Prophets doe for the most part preach judgement, and damnation according to the rigor of the Law, they are counted Clouds. In this marke they doe imitate the Apostles, and Evangelists, they are called Lights, for so saith our Saviour to his Apostle ; *You are a Light set upon an Hill*, and it is said of *John the Baptist*, *that he was a shining Lampe*, and it is required of all Ministers to bee Lights, *Let your Light so shine before men that they may see your good workes, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven*, to shew that they were false Cloudes, hee saith, that they wanted water ; to shew that they are false Lights, he saith, *that they are wandring Starres*, now there are fixed Stars, and there are wandring Stars, they

The foolish Prophets displaid.

they are called fixed Starres as I remember in *Cardanus* his Astrologic, not because they do not move at all, but because they alwaies keepe a firme and stedfast motion, and they are called wandring stars, *quia erroneum habent motum*, because they have an erroneous motion, such is the nature of these foolish Prophets, they are wandring Starres, they cannot indure to stay in one place long, but they are alwaies running up and downe, and so are their disciples too, they like those Sermons best that they run for, and these wandring staring Prophets may be called spirituall beggers and vagrants, and if an order bee not taken to send them home againe with a passe, they will bring the world to a strange passe, for now they goe about to compasse Sea and Land to make one Profelyte, and when they have done so, they make them twice more the children of Satan then they were before.

To shew that they are false Lights; he saith, *that they are Starres, they shine in the night, they borrow their light from Lucifer that hath transformed himselfe into an Angell of Light*; And this marke doth well agree with the first, for those that creepe and lurke in corners, desire nothing more then that they make worke in the night. They are wandring Stars, if they had wandred to doe good, it had beene good and commendable, but their wandring is erroneous, for this is the property of a wandring Starre, they maintaine scismes and heresies, they have left to move in their proper Sphere the Church, and their motion is now erroneous retrograde, wandring into

The foolish Prophets displaid.

private houses; and yet these wandering Prophets would bee called *Levites*, but I should rather thinke them *Gadites* of *Gad*, from running up and downe: their women followers if they please may bee called *Levites*, yet not from *Levi* but from *Levitic*.

The 8.marke.

They seperate themselves; that is, they are such, as segregate themselves from common assemblies, such as call and stile themselves, and none but themselves to bee the Christians, such as carry a Pharisaicall & superficial shew of holinesse, that in the pride of their hearts *thanke God that they are not like other men*, and so they singe out themselves and pray alone.

Cant. 3. 2.

We may reade that when the Spouse in the *Canticles* did go about in the City, by the streets and by the open places, *shee sought Christ her beloved but found him not*, so if wee will leave and seperate our selves from the assemblies of the Church, wee may seeke Christ long enough, but we shall not find him; for, *extra ecclesiam nulla est salus*, without the pale of the Church, there is no Christ, no salvation; for Christ is jealous and will not have his Spouse to bee seene of any out of his owne house, if any will walke in the streets of the City and open places; if they will goe too and fro in the evening, and grin like a Dog, hee will send them forth by the steps of their flocks, to feede their Kids by the rents of the Shepheards: if you know not what is meant by being set to keep kids and goates; it is to feede such as are cast awaies, or rather cast away themselves: for it is saide that at the

Cant. 1. 7.

The foolish Prophets displaid.

the day of judgement, the sheepe shall bee seperated from the goates, that is, the righteous from the wicked, the Shepheards from the Goatheards, the good Pastors from the foolish Prophets.

These foolish Prophets, and their disciples doe much resemble that sect which rose up amongst the *Egyptians*, that they called *Remiboth*: that would live after their own will and pleasure; they did plant themselves in great Townes and Cities; they would bee subject unto none, they did all things out of a vaine affectation and selfe conceit, they used often fightings, and speake hardly of the other Clergy, and in their feasts, they would overcharge their stomackes: They separte themselves, they thinke no others good enough to bee of their society or worthy to commerce with them, and thus they transgresse the Commandements of God, *in that they will not love their neighbours as themselves*; thus do they sow the seede of discord and dissention, in that they will not love, and live, and dwell together in vnity; thus do they deny the communion of Saints, in that they will bee singuler; thus doe they oppugne the prediction of our Saviour, that there should bee one Flocke, one Fold, and one Shepheard: thus doe they strive to reedifie and build a new the partition wall that CHRIST threw downe by his death.

John 10. 16.

And thus you have seene how *Jude* hath marked out *Judas*, a false Apostle, and all foolish *Iudasits* his off-spring, but yet hee giveth them many more markes, as that *they are murmurers, complainers,*

walking

The foolish Prophets displaid.

walking after their owne lusts, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having mens persons in admiration because of advantage; and many more markes hee hath for them, but it is not my desire to marke them out for fooles in the highest degree, and I leave out the rest, that they may score up themselves for wise men. Then when you see any such that creepe into corners to seduce simple women, or that are fleshly minded, that despise government, and speake evill of those that are in authority, that use much preaching little to the purpose, that wander up and downe from place to place, and stay the longest where they fare the best, and separate themselves from common assemblies, there is no question but that these, these are the foolish Prophets that follow their owne spirit and have scene nothing.

4 Gene. part.

Wherein their folly doth consist or the ground of their *Woe*, and that is in following their owne spirit and have scene nothing, I am now brought into such a plunge, that I must either follow their spirit, or else leave to follow my text; must I follow their spirit? it shall be as *Iehu* followed the foolish Prophets of *Baal*, to drive them all into the Temple and take away their spirit with the sword of the spirit, must I follow their spirit? it shalbe as *Israel* followed *Canaan* to drive them out of the land: but to leave my following them alone, let mee follow them following their owne spirit, for thus saith the Lord, *Woe unto the foolish Prophets that follow their owne spirit*; had they followed the Spirit of God as it is,

Gen. 1. 2.

and

The foolish Prophets displaid.

and the Spirit of God moved upon the waters; it had beene praiſe worthy, or had they followed the spirit, *per modum excellentia*, by way of eminency and excellency, as our Saviour did in the fourth of *Mat.* *Rom. 8. 16.* them, then was Iesus led up of the Spirit; or, ſince they muſt needes follow their owne ſpirit, had they done it *cooperante et coadiuvante ſpiritu ſancto*. The holy Ghoſt cooperating and helping their ſpirits. And the Spirit bearing witneſſe with our ſpirit that we are the children of God. But to follow their own ſpirit without the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of God bearing witneſſe to our ſpirit, is meere folly and falſe hood.

A man may be ſaid to follow his owne ſpirit two manner of waies. Either by delivering of his owne inventions & traditions, or elſe by wreſting and perverting the word of God from the true genuine ſence and meaning.

Hec that delivereth the Doctrine of his owne ſpirit, may thinke that he pleaſeth God, and deſerveth eternall life, but yet his ſpirit ſhall deceive him, exemplified in the *Phariſee*, thanking God that hee was not like other men, yet hee was reputed of Chriſt unjuſt and wicked. Nay many of theſe fooliſh Prophets are confident of their ſalvation, and will plead with Chriſt in the *reſurrection*, Lord, Lord, have wee not Propheſied in thy Name, and by thy Name caſt out Devils, and done many great workes? yet he ſhall ſay, Depart from me, I know you not; here wee ſee how a man may be deluded in following his owne ſpirit, without the Spirit of God bearing witneſſe with it. *Matth. 7. 22.*

The foolish Prophets displaid.

They follow their own spirit, they thinke scorne to reade and learne of others, that are more learned then themselves, they thinke that they understand all Scriptures without the aide and assistance of any others, Saint *Augustine* saith, *nullus unquam ita laetus est ut ab omnibus in omnibus intelligeretur* : That is, no man at any time hath expressed himselfe that all men understood him in all things ; much more the words of the Spirit are not understood of all, no nor of any ; the holy Spirit reserveth the knowledge of many things to himselfe, that hee may alwaies have us to be his Schollers, *multa spiritus solum ostendit, ut alliciat multa tradit ut afficiat*, the holy Spirit doth shew many things unto us, to allure us, he doth teach us many things, that we may be takē with thē : therefore, saith *Luther*, *I know that he is an impudent rask fellow, that dares avouch that hee understandeth any one Book in the Scripture*, nay saith he, *who dares presume that hee hath throgly understood any one Psalme*. Then let us not trust to our owne wits, but let us reade what *S. Augustine*, *S. Hierome*, *Athanasius*, *Hillarius*, and others say, they have found out many things that we could not, and perhaps others shall finde out some things not found of him before : therefore saith Saint *Paul*, *omnia probate et quae bona sunt retinete*, try all, but lay hold only on that which is good, & saith *Hierome* *superbarum in sensatarumque mentio est, suo tantum uti consilio*, it is the part of proud and insatuate minds, to use only their owne opinions.

FINIS.

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